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LAW OF THE SEA
STRENGTHENING OF SECURITY AND CO-OPERATION
IN THE MEDITERRANEAN REGION

SECURITY COUNCIL
Forty-sixth year

Letter dated 1 March 1991 from the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to refer to the letter of the Permanent Representative of Greece dated 19 February 1991 (A/46/87-S/22243) in which he quotes two sentences from a speech delivered by President Turgut Ozal and goes on to draw conclusions about Turkey's foreign policy on the basis of this quotation derived from a newspaper report.

If the Permanent Representative of Greece had quoted President Ozal's speech more thoroughly, instead of quoting from it selectively, it would have become evident that the theme of this speech was a description of Turkey's peaceful foreign policy, its desire to maintain friendly relations with all of its neighbours, and a reaffirmation of Turkey's determination and ability to stand up to any foreign threat directed at its security. In fact, in the paragraph preceding the passage quoted by the Permanent Representative of Greece, President Ozal had reiterated that Turkish policy towards its neighbours derived its inspiration from the guiding principle of Turkey's foreign policy, which is, Peace in the World.

It has been stressed on all occasions that Turkey does not threaten Greece and has no designs on Greece's territorial integrity. Turkey's policies towards Greece clearly demonstrate this. The objective of Turkey's policies vis-à-vis Greece is the establishment of friendly relations based on good-neighbourliness and cooperation. That is why Turkey favours the resolution of outstanding bilateral issues through dialogue and negotiations.

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* A/46/50.

Greece, on the other hand, has created an artificial Turkish threat and is using this imaginary threat to pursue a policy of hostility towards Turkey. This hostile Greek policy is manifested in all international forums. The document A/46/87-S/22243 is yet another instance of this hostile policy. The motive behind Greece's policy of hostility is the knowledge that Turkey will not allow Athens to pursue its expansionism in the Aegean Sea. This expansionism is a fundamental element of instability and constitutes a threat to the region's peace and security.

As riparian States, both Greece and Turkey have rights and interests in the Aegean Sea. By expanding the breadth of its territorial waters, Greece would like to extend Greek sovereignty over the high seas, the international airspace of the Aegean as well as over the as yet undemarcated continental shelf. If successful, such a policy would clearly violate the principles of equity, given the special configuration of the Aegean Sea. This would be so because the Aegean is a semi-enclosed sea with over three thousand Greek islands. As a consequence, approximately one half of the Aegean Sea is already under Greek sovereignty. If Greece were to expand its territorial waters beyond the present six-mile limit, the Aegean Sea would become a sort of Greek lake with practically no international waters left. This would deprive Turkey of fishing and other rights which it has enjoyed over the centuries and would completely upset the present balance of rights between the two riparian States of the Aegean Sea. Obviously, Turkey cannot accept this. Any action of this kind by one country which would seriously affect the interests of another country and which would result in a grave injustice would constitute a clear case of abuse of right. Were Greece to attempt to carry out such a fait accompli, this would drastically restrict the rights and interests not only of Turkey, but of third countries as well.

Turkey has made known on numerous occasions that an expansion by Greece of its territorial waters in the Aegean Sea would bring about very serious consequences. In such circumstances, Turkey would not hesitate to take whatever measures are necessary to safeguard its rights and interests.

Taking advantage of the Gulf crisis, Greece has proceeded with the militarization of the eastern Aegean islands in clear contravention of international treaties. It has also falsified the number of its AMX-30 tanks in the notifications that it has to submit under the Conventional Armed Forces in Europe Treaty, with the intention, presumably, of secretly redeploying these tanks. These sinister actions suggest that Greece might be contemplating some new fait accompli in the Aegean Sea.

It was against this background that President Ozal felt the need to state, once again, that Turkey would not allow Greece to engage in expansionist adventures in the Aegean.

I would be grateful if you could have this letter circulated as a document of the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly, under the same items as document A/46/87-S/22243, namely, items 36 and 67 of the preliminary list, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Mustafa AKSIN
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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